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A Lesson for Currency Reformers.

THE SUN has, all along, insisted that none of the bills for "currency reform," now before the House Committee on Banking and Currency, could possibly become laws, because the Senate would never consent to enact them. Particularly has it pointed out the folly of engraving upon these bills a declaration in favor of the single gold standard. Such a declaration, we have said, even if made by this Congress, would have no binding effect on its successors, and the effort to get it made now would be only a provocation to the silverites both in the House and in the Senate to renew their warfare upon gold.

The decisive vote of 41 to 27 by which the Senate, on Thursday, agreed to take up Senator Vane's resolution in favor of paying the national debt in silver dollars at the rate of 16 to 1, amply justifies our warning. The resolution will probably be passed by the Senate and sent to the House, where, though it will finally be defeated, it will give rise to a fierce debate and revive the enthusiasm for free silver which otherwise would have remained dormant.

There is a wise Scottish saying, "Let sleeping dogs lie." The agitation in favor of free silver was quieted for the time by the defeat of Mr. BRYAN last November, and the rise of wheat to a dollar a bushel administered to it a further soporific. Now come the currency reformers and wake it up with their crazy scheme to substitute for Government notes bank notes at a cost to the nation of \$500,000,000, and, as if that were not enough, with an exasperating communication of silver, which all sensible people see is premature. The Senate has very properly taught these fanatics a lesson, and we hope they will profit by it.

Sunday and the Legislature.

On the 6th of October, 1887, there was organized in this State what was then called the "Personal Liberty" party, subject to the declaration following:

"Whereas, in many parts of the State, under pretense of aiding in the prevention of crime and of diminishing the causes of pauperism, attempts are multiplying to encroach upon the rights of person and of property guaranteed by those principles of natural liberty upon which the whole structure of our republican system and of the Federal and State Government is based, and our foreign-born citizens, especially those of German descent, are, according to authentic statistical reports, considered to be assiduously inured to the idea of official action, wherever and wherever applicable, and all legitimate means in our power will be used to secure their election."

In compliance with these and other resolutions of a similar character, there was appointed a Central Executive Committee to agitate what was then called "the question of personal liberty." The Democrats nominated for the head of their State ticket that year a Rochester brewer, FREDERICK COOK, or KOCHE, and the State fight was made largely by the Democrats upon the issue of "personal liberty," and of opposition to what the Democratic platform called laws "needlessly interfering with the personal liberties and reasonable habits and customs of any portion of our citizens." The effect of increasing the Democratic vote for COOK and his associates in all the large cities of the State where the German voting population is large, and of stimulating the activity of the prohibitionists in the interior districts to such an extent that the nominee of the Prohibition party for Secretary of State polled 42,000 votes. All the large cities, particularly in the interior, were carried by the Democrats, Albany giving a Democratic majority of 2,000, Rochester, 3,500, Troy 3,300, Utica 500, Kingston 300, and Elmira 700.

The Personal Liberty party, as such, made no separate nominations in 1887, or in any of the years succeeding, which were years of Democratic success in all State elections until 1892, when the excise law, now superseded by the Raines law, was enacted by the Democratic Legislature and approved by the Governor. The adoption of this law put an end to the agitation of the Personal Liberty men, for it was accepted by them generally as in part, at least, in accordance with their demand, but to many it was not satisfactory. In the State at large it was not popular, and the divisions and dissensions to which it gave rise discredited the cause until it was abandoned. There has been a recrudescence of "personal liberty" agitation in the Legislature this year, but it has taken a new form. It differs from the agitation of ten years ago in not applying particularly to liquor selling on Sunday, but to announcements not associated with the consumption of alcoholic beverages on that day. Since 1887 there has been no material increase in the percentage of German-American voters in New York. It is substantially the same now as it was ten years ago, having been little increased through immigration during the decade intervening since the Personal Liberty party appealed to authentic statistics in proof of their assertion that the foreign-born citizens of German descent in New York "were assiduously, temperate and law-abiding people." Though the German immigration has fallen off materially since 1887, there has been an enormous increase since that time of immigration from Russia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, and Roumania. The Hebrew voting population of New York is much larger than it was ten years ago, and the present Sunday laws of the State, so far as they affect

indoor and outdoor amusements, theatres, concert, baseball games, and entertainments of various kinds, are unsatisfactory to a considerable number of voters who are most numerous in the city of New York, and in the district of the town from which comes Assemblyman HARRISBURG, the sponsor for most of these bills. His proposition to "liberalize the Sunday laws," accordingly, has support in parts of the great city, but, of course, meets with little favor in the interior districts, and will get no encouragement from the majority of members in either branch of this Legislature.

Mr. HARRISBURG's bills for theatrical performances and concerts and baseball and other outdoor amusements on Sunday have aroused much hostility among the theatrical people, who have sent protests against the measures to the Governor on the ground that they tend to deprive them of their livelihood. "Sunday laws" are to be the beginning of a general assault on the observance of the Sabbath, and will be resisted by both the churches and the run of people who desire the rest from labor which the preservation of the present Sunday laws affords.

It is significant that these bills have not been presented by the spokesman of Tammany or by a member of Tammany Hall and that they have not been submitted to the consideration of a Democratic caucus.

Is There a Presbyterian Church?

The enthusiastic reception of the Rev. Dr. SHIELDS at the Princeton alumni dinner on Thursday evening was very significant. Dr. SHIELDS is the professor of that university who signed the application for a license of the taproom of the Princeton Inn, in contravention of a rule made by the General Assembly prohibiting Presbyterian ministers from assisting in the procurement of any liquor license. Because of that rebellion against the highest authority of his Church he was arraigned for trial by the New Brunswick Presbytery of New Jersey, and only escaped from consequent discipline by announcing formally his withdrawal from the Church.

It was for that reason that Dr. SHIELDS was made the hero of the dinner of the Princeton alumni, provoking so great and so frequent applause as to lead the presiding officer to suggest humorously that it might be necessary to discipline him for interrupting the proceedings. Incidentally their applause was intended, probably, as an expression of approval of the provision of a semi-official taproom for the Princeton juniors and seniors; but that is not a matter which concerns us now. The significant manifestation was the boisterous glorification of a Presbyterian minister for withdrawing from his Church not on any ground of religious doctrine or principle, but simply because he was determined to assert his personal liberty against the authority of the General Assembly.

Princeton University, it is true, contains among its alumni very many men who are not Presbyterians, but who follow other systems of theology than the Westminster Confession or have no religious belief at all. The Rev. Dr. SHIELDS, however, was a Presbyterian and a Presbyterian minister, and why? Was he in that Church simply as a matter of taste and convenience, or because he believed in its doctrine, that is, as a matter of conviction? What reason is there for the existence of a Church, the Presbyterian or any other, if it does not present a distinctive body of doctrine appealing to the convictions of its members? If a minister can belong to it as a matter of convenience or of chance merely, and can leave it consistently at any time and pass over to some other Church, can his flock have any distinctive faith justifying its separate existence?

In other words, if Dr. SHIELDS deserved the applause of the alumni of Princeton at their dinner on Thursday evening, has not the time come when the Presbyterian Church should disband and go out of existence, as representing nothing which is binding on any conscience? If the rules of conduct laid down by its highest representative authority conflict with a man's inclinations, and he is at liberty to leave it for that reason simply, how can any religious authority remain to it?

Dr. SHIELDS did not throw up the Presbyterian Church because of any declared objection to its doctrine or ecclesiastical system, but simply to be free to sign applications for liquor licenses whenever it pleased him so to do. On the same general ground any Presbyterian who finds his personal inclinations or appetites restricted by the discipline of his Church is justified in quitting it, nothing in its special creed, theology, or order putting any conscientious obligation on him. That being so, and the course of Dr. SHIELDS indicates that in his opinion it is so, what is the excuse for maintaining longer the merely nominal existence of the Presbyterian Church? If it is not the custodian of any body of faith and doctrine peculiar to it, it is not a Church, and the labor of centuries expended in building it up as a distinct religious organization has been wasted.

Russia's Alleged Ultimatum to China.

If the threat said to have been made by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Peking was really uttered, it may seem at first sight that a crisis in the Far East can hardly be averted. It is known that England has offered to advance to China the money needed to pay the last installment of the indemnity due to Japan, on condition that three new treaty ports shall be opened, including the harbor of Tientsin on the Liautung peninsula. To the opening of two of the ports designated, the Czar's representative seems to have made no objection, but he is alleged to have threatened reprisals and the withdrawal of his master's friendship and protection in case Tientsin should be included in the list.

A glance at the map will disclose the motive for the vehement remonstrance of the Russian Chargé d'Affaires. Tientsin, lying, as it does, on the Liautung Peninsula, not far to the north of Port Arthur, commands the route which would have to be followed by a railway connecting that naval station with the Trans-Siberian line. If a British fleet were at liberty to coast anchor at Tientsin, and it would have the privilege of that harbor became a treaty port, the value of Port Arthur to Russia would be gone, for the railway linking that fortress to the Russian possessions could be cut at any hour in the event of war with England, and the Russian garrison would find itself in the same hopeless plight as were the defenders of Sebastopol. Moreover, even in time of peace, the transformation of Tientsin into a treaty port would assure to England the greater part of the trade with Liautung and Chinese Manchuria, and practically would thwart the Russian plans for ascendancy in that quarter. There is, in a word, no doubt that

England's demand concerning Tientsin is a shot in the bulwark, and punctures the whole programme arranged at St. Petersburg, when Russia forced Japan to revise the Shimonoeki treaty, and surrender all of the Chinese territory on the mainland of Asia which was ceded by that instrument.

It will be observed that England does not assert that the Russian warships should not be permitted to winter at Port Arthur. Public opinion will no longer justify the British Government in insisting that the Russian naval force in the Pacific shall be confined for many months in the year to the ice-locked harbor of Vladivostok. Measures, however, have been taken to prevent the Czar from converting Port Arthur into a fortress which would make him dominant in the Pacific and the Yellow Sea, and from gradually acquiring virtual dominion over that section of the Middle Kingdom which lies north and northeast of the Great Wall. That is to say, a partition of China shall not take place if England can avert it, and there is little reason to doubt that she is able at least to postpone it, because, with the cooperation of Japan, she is not only preponderant at sea, but has at her disposal, also, a larger land force than Russia can place at the further end of Asia before the completion of the Siberian Railway.

That the prospect of an early dismemberment of China is not as promising as it was indicated by the report, said to be current in the official quarters of Shanghai, that Germany will make Kiao Chou an open port on lines similar to those governing Hong Kong. It is certain that such was not Germany's original intention. Her design at first was to follow the practice which she has pursued uniformly in her other treaty ports, and to keep for herself all the trade with the population of the province of Shantung, which possession of Kiao Chou would enable her to command. If, however, Kiao Chou is to be open to traders from all countries as is Hong Kong England cannot reasonably object to the Kaiser's acquisition of the former port, since he would merely use it for a naval station.

Will the Czar fight if his protest against the conversion of Tientsin as a treaty port is unheeded at Peking? He could, undoubtedly, count upon the assistance of France, but the Russian and French warships combined are outnumbered in Chinese waters by those which fly the British flag. Even if the Czar could also reckon upon the support of the German squadron, that accession of strength would be greatly more than counterbalanced by the Japanese fleet, which, it is believed, will side with England. The land force, too, now stationed at Vladivostok, or any force that the Czar could dispatch thither with the existing means of transportation, would be inadequate to cope with the standing army of Japan, especially as the latter's operations would be immensely facilitated by a preponderant sea power.

Russia, in fine, under present conditions, can scarcely hope to win as against England and Japan. In the far East, and there, unless she considers the hour ripe for assailing India, she will probably avoid a conflict and submit to the temporary frustration of her plans for the southward extension of her Siberian frontier.

Hawaii and Beet Sugar.

The reply of Secretary WILSON to the Senate resolution of Jan. 17 must completely dispose of any fear that the annexation of Hawaii will injuriously affect the culture of beet sugar or sorghum in the United States. Our average annual imports of sugar from 1890 to 1897 inclusive have been 1,530,482 full tons, valued at \$101,575,293, while from 1893 to 1897 inclusive Hawaii averaged annually only 149,450 tons, valued at \$9,973,924. During the fiscal year ending June 30 last the sugar imports were 443,323 tons heavier than the average of the four years preceding, as importers anticipated the effect of the new tariff act; and Hawaii's share, accordingly, was 43,052 tons above her average. But for that exceptional year she only furnished 9.1 per cent. of the sugar consumed here, while her share from 1893 to 1897 was only 7.1 per cent.

Of the total consumption in 1896 beet sugars furnished 18 per cent., while last year the percentage jumped to 37 per cent., largely through the abnormal condition of the Cuban sugar product. The fiscal year 1897 shows a total consumption of 2,096,263 full tons. Of this, the total refined product of imported sugar was 1,700,007 tons, or 94 per cent., leaving the domestic product at 335,656 tons, or 16 per cent. Of this domestic product by far the largest factor was cane sugar, 257,007 tons, beet sugar following with 41,347. The rest was maple sugar, exceeding 5,000 tons, and sorghum, about 300 tons.

Such, then, are the statistics which the Secretary of Agriculture furnishes. The first question that arises is whether Hawaii's production will be increased. It has already been developed greatly by free entry into the United States, and Mr. WILSON points out that one result is the gradual exhaustion of the soil through continuous crops. The planters already have to buy fertilizers, and the guano of the Pacific Islands, in turn, becoming exhausted, is expensive so that they are ultimately go elsewhere—perhaps to Chili for saltpetre, to Florida for phosphates, and to Germany for potash. This is the drawback to any advance on the small share of Hawaii in our total import of sugar.

Now, turning to beet sugar, its prospects of increase here are encouraging. Mr. WILSON says that the percentage of sugar in American beets averages much higher than in the European, which are their real competitors, rather than the Hawaiian sugar cane. The crops should be taken in rotation with grasses, vegetables, and grains, from which the nitrogen, potassium, and phosphoric acid needed for sugar beet production will be restored to the soil. His conclusion is that the present Hawaiian system "cannot compete with farm management in the United States, where the fertility of the soil is not at all reduced." Enormous as our consumption of sugar is, about 2,000,000 tons, "ten acres on each of 100,000 farms in rotation with other crops would meet home demands." But "the Hawaiian sugar grower is a one-crop man," and he cannot, in the long run, increase his production so as to injure sugar production here.

Mr. WILSON is also confident that sorghum will play a large part eventually in the American sugar supply. Sorghum molasses is now very extensively made, and the manufacture of sugar from the sorghum plant is increasing. But as to beet sugar and sorghum both, the main point is that, while the production can be made incidental here to the feeding of animals, there is nothing of the sort possible in Hawaii. There the cane

is grown; it is hauled to the mill; the bagasse is not returned to the soil; the available plant food is reduced, and the planters must search to the ends of the earth for fertilizers." Again, Hawaii has cheap coolie labor now, but when she becomes subject to our laws, a change will be wrought, and wages will go up.

If, then, it is true that "Hawaii will not seriously compete with sugar producers in the States," are her own prospects of agriculture dark? No, because she can keep up for a time her sugar production, even if not so extending it as to injure that of the States; and, in particular, as Mr. WILSON points out, she can turn to producing coffee with splendid success, there possessing "a monopoly with which no State in the Union can interfere." She can also grow many fine fruits that cannot be grown here.

But whatever may be the change in Hawaii's agriculture after entering the Union, the notion that her admission will harm American beet sugar interests appears to be exploded.

The Wild Man from Borneo.

Our honey-hearted contemporary, the Boston Evening Transcript, tries to believe that the Hon. CHARLES BONAPARTE was not in earnest in the extraordinary defense of lynching which he made in a lecture in Boston last Sunday night and upon which THE SUN has already commented. Here is the Transcript's apology for the apostle of lynching:

"A great many people suppose when a man says a spade is a spade, and they are not necessarily stupid people, when he takes upon himself, not only to say so, but to say so, and if not approvingly, of lynching, whether of Senators or lesser people, they think this involves a rope and tree or lamp-post. We certainly cannot be so stupid. Mr. BONAPARTE intended to encourage such people to say so, when he takes upon himself to say so, and if not approvingly, of lynching, whether of Senators or lesser people, they think this involves a rope and tree or lamp-post. We certainly cannot be so stupid. Mr. BONAPARTE intended to encourage such people to say so, when he takes upon himself to say so, and if not approvingly, of lynching, whether of Senators or lesser people, they think this involves a rope and tree or lamp-post. We certainly cannot be so stupid. 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